

O 092123Z JUL 08
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO PAGE 02 STATE 073774 092133Z
AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 073774

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2033
TAGS: [GM](#) [KN](#) [LI](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: (S) M/V ANTARES I: SUCCESSFUL COMPLIANT BOARDING

Classified By: ISN ACTING DAS KENNETH W. STALEY, REASONS 1.4 (b), (d)

ACTION REQUEST

¶1. (S) Posts are requested to approach appropriate-level host nation officials to express our appreciation for a recent successfully concluded compliant boarding of the M/V ANTARES I. Posts may draw from objectives, background, and talking points/non-paper below, as appropriate. The vessel is Liberian-flagged and owned by a German firm.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (S//REL Recipients) A boarding team from the USS Bulkeley boarded and searched the M/V ANTARES I, a Liberian-flagged, German-owned cargo vessel, on 13 June in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The boarding was conducted in accordance with our bilateral Proliferation Security Initiative Ship-Boarding Agreement (SBA) with Liberia. The vessel was suspected of carrying a cargo of North Korean-origin steel from China to Syria. The Syrian consignee for this cargo, Mechanical Construction Factory of Damascus, Syria, has procured for Syria's weapons development efforts in the past. For this reason, the USG decided to invoke the SBA in order to gather more information regarding the cargo.

OBJECTIVES

¶3. (S//REL Recipients) Posts should:

- Express our appreciation for responding quickly and positively (Monrovia only).
- Note that this is the type of cooperation envisioned under the Proliferation Security Initiative and bilateral ship-boarding agreements.
- Provide additional information explaining why we sought to board the vessel in question.

TALKING POINTS/NON-PAPER

¶4. (S//REL Liberia) The following points are for MONROVIA ONLY:

- We would like to thank you for your recent cooperation in granting permission, as the flag state, to board the Liberian-flagged vessel M/V ANTARES I.
- We would like to provide you with additional information regarding our request.
- We sought permission to board the vessel because we had received information that the M/V ANTARES I had loaded a cargo of steel, possibly of North Korean origin, at Damietta,

Egypt.

-- Our information also indicated that this steel was consigned to the Syrian entity Mechanical Construction Factory (MCF) in Damascus, Syria.

-- MCF, the consignee, had previously acted as an intermediary for Syria's weapons development program.

-- The shipper of this cargo was the Chinese shipping company COSCO Logistics (Dalian) Company. Our information also indicates that the DPRK company Korea Foreign Transportation Corporation was also probably involved in this shipment.

-- Given the nature of the cargo and the entities involved in the transaction, we assessed that we had reasonable grounds to suspect that the vessel was engaged in proliferation by sea. In order to gather additional information regarding the cargo, we sought your permission, as the vessel's flag state, to board and search the vessel. After the boarding, the vessel was allowed to continue on its voyage to Syria.

-- We are now analyzing the information obtained during the boarding.

-- We appreciate your timely cooperation in this matter. This is exactly the type of timely action that the Proliferation Security Initiative and our bilateral ship-boarding agreement is intended to foster.

End points for Liberia.

15. (S//REL Germany) The following points are for BERLIN ONLY:

-- In the spirit of our bilateral non-proliferation cooperation, we would like to follow-up with you regarding a boarding conducted earlier this month by a US Navy vessel of the Liberian-flagged vessel M/V ANTARES I. As a German firm is the ship's owner of record, we wanted to provide you with information concerning the reasons for our action.

-- We received information that the M/V ANTARES I had loaded a cargo of steel, possibly of North Korean origin, at Damietta, Egypt.

-- Our information also indicated that this steel was consigned to the Syrian entity Mechanical Construction Factory (MCF) in Damascus, Syria.

-- MCF, the consignee, had previously acted as an intermediary for Syria's weapons development program.

-- The shipper of this cargo was the Chinese shipping company COSCO Logistics (Dalian) Company. Our information also indicates that the DPRK company Korea Foreign Transportation Corporation was also probably involved in this shipment.

-- Given the nature of the cargo and the entities involved in the transaction, we had reasonable grounds to suspect that the vessel might be engaged in proliferation-related activities. In order to gather additional information regarding the cargo, we sought Liberia's permission, as the ANTARES I's flag state, to board and search the vessel, pursuant to the U.S.) Liberia shipboarding agreement. After the boarding, the vessel was allowed to continue on its voyage to Syria.

-- We are now analyzing the information obtained during the boarding.

-- This is exactly the type of timely action that the Proliferation Security Initiative and our bilateral ship-boarding agreements are intended to foster.
End points for Germany.

POINT OF CONTACT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENT

¶6. (U) Washington point of contact for follow-up is Mark Felipe, ISN/CPI, (202) 647-5376, felipem2@state.sgov.gov.

¶7. (U) Please report delivery of points and any immediate response by 30 June.

¶8. (U) Washington thanks posts for assistance. Please slug responses for AF, EUR, ISN, and T.
RICE

NNNN

End Cable Text